

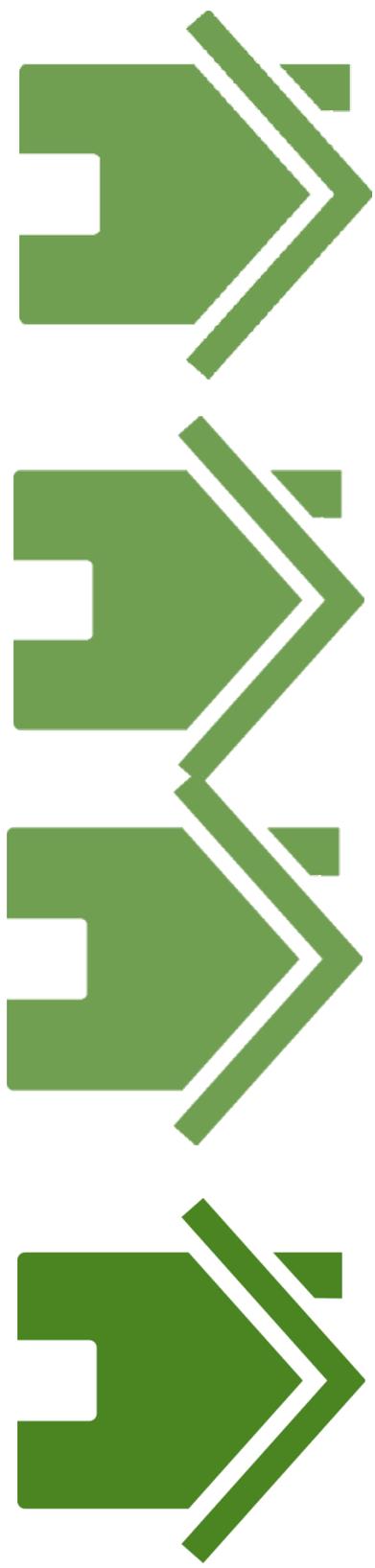


OUTCOME REPORT

REVIEW OF:

THE HOUSING STRATEGY 2023 - 2027

**STAGE 2 PUBLIC CONSULTATION
RESULTS**



July 2022

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of the stage 2 public consultation on the proposals for the Epping Forest District Council Housing Strategy 2022-2027 that was undertaken between 10 May 2022 and 27 June 2022 as part of the review of the *Big Four Housing strategies and policies during 2021/2022.

2. SUMMARY

A comprehensive open consultation exercise was undertaken in two stages between May 2021 and June 2022 to underpin the review of the Housing Strategy for 2023-2027

The report detailing the [results of the *Big Four Stage 1 Consultation](#) is available on the Housing Strategy page of the [Council's website](#). This report concentrates on the stage-2 public consultation between 10 May 2022 and 27 June 2022 including a professional stakeholder workshops, resident and member briefings and an on-line public survey. Publicity included a local press release, social media, and newsletter content, and 317 emails to professional and community representatives and resident groups.

Active contributions were received from 151 respondents including 74 on-line surveys, 60 delegates at the workshop and 17 democratically elected Members of the Council or community representatives who attended briefings.

The overwhelming response was in overall agreement with the proposed priorities, aims and objectives presented for consultation, although a variety of views or challenges were expressed over different aspect of the detail across all channels. Only part of the proposed vision was

supported, and the workshop generated a lot of ideas and practical commitment to delivering the strategy in partnership.

The consultation feedback has been evaluated and a list of modifications have been proposed where it is considered to be reasonable and legitimate to do so.

*The 'Big Four' Housing Strategies and Policies refers to a review of the Housing Strategy, the Allocations Scheme, the Tenancy Policy and the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy undertaken between 2021 and 2022.

3. METHODOLOGY

The consultation was designed to give everyone with an interest in Housing in the District the opportunity to contribute to the review.

The stage 2 consultation began with a professional stakeholder workshop followed by public consultation including an on-line survey direct email, and a series of briefing sessions and webinars. Respondents had the opportunity of contributing to a range of open and closed questions and providing general comments in order to provide both quantitative and qualitative data for analysis.

Publicity

The consultation was publicised in a local press release, and a range of social media platforms including the Council's website, the Tenant and Leaseholders newsletter, on Facebook and direct emails to 317 professional and community contacts including:

- Registered providers of social housing in the district
- The clerks to the town councils and parish councils in the district
- The Community Safety Partnership and other statutory services
- Community groups including the Faith Covenant
- Essex County Council and the district, borough, and city councils in Essex
- Third sector partners with an active interest in Housing in the district
- Developers, Planners and Architects with an interest in affordable housing
- All elected Members of the Council and Council staff

Approach

Everyone was asked to comment on:

- the proposed vision for the Strategy
- the five proposed priorities
- the proposed aim and objectives for each priority

whether they had other suggestions or comments

4. CONTENT

Professional Stakeholder Workshop

Professional stakeholders were invited to a full morning workshop on 10 May 2022 to consider the specific challenges, and opportunities of producing a 5-year housing strategy for the District, including the feasibility of achieving the Council's proposals (and in principal agreement to co-

produce and deliver a partnership action plan) before presenting these to a wider audience for consultation.

The presentations and material discussed on the day can be found at [Appendix 1B](#)

Briefings and webinars

All elected Members of the Council and Town and Parish Councillors were invited to attend and contribute to either a live or a recorded briefing and raise questions during or after the live briefing.

Members of the Tenant and Leaseholder panel were invited to participate in a webinar to consider the proposals in detail and raise any questions they had.

Residents were also invited to participate in a webinar to consider the proposals in detail and raise any questions they had.

The same material was presented at briefings and webinars and can be found at [Appendix 1D](#)

The feedback from the briefings and webinars has been captured and included in the [Proposed Modifications Table](#) on page 17.

On-line survey

The online survey was open for 33 days via a link on the Council's website using SurveyMonkey software with the option to request an accessible version in an alternative format.

The survey combined a series of questions with multiple choice answers, free space for comments and the option to provide confidential personal profiling information for anonymised equalities analysis. Both the content and the result of the survey forms the main structure of this report.

5. RESPONSE RATE

Professional stakeholder workshop

The professional stakeholder workshop on 10 May 2022 was attended by 60 delegates and industry specialists with a specific interest and/or involvement with Housing related services in the District. A list of delegates and the organisations or services represented at the workshop is included at [Appendix 1C](#).

Briefings and Webinars

The live briefings and webinars were attended by a combined total 17 elected Members of the Council, Town and Parish Councillors, residents and community representatives.

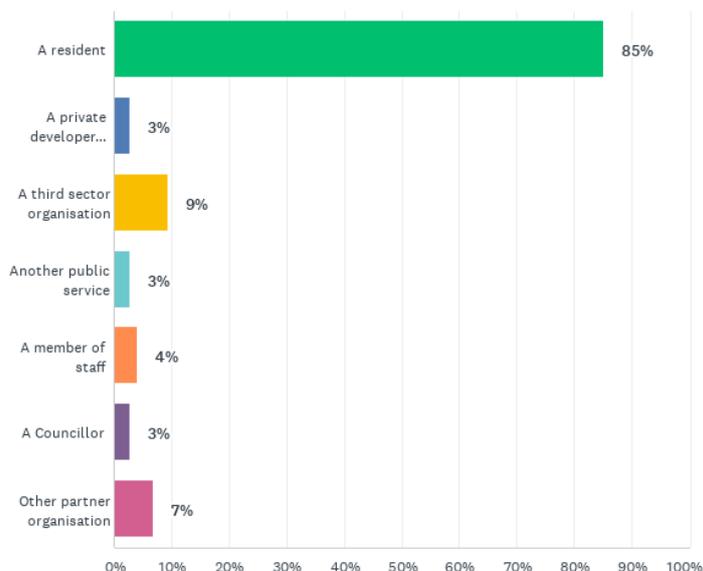
On-line Survey

The online survey was completed by 74 respondents. The vast majority of on-line surveys were completed by residents (85%). Professional stakeholders, community representatives and elected members of the Council typically opted to provide feedback during the workshop or briefings.

6. RESULTS

Everyone completing the on-line survey was asked to indicate whether they were responding in their capacity as a resident of the District or as a representative of an organisation with an interest in Housing in the District.

Please select one or more of following for this survey. I am...



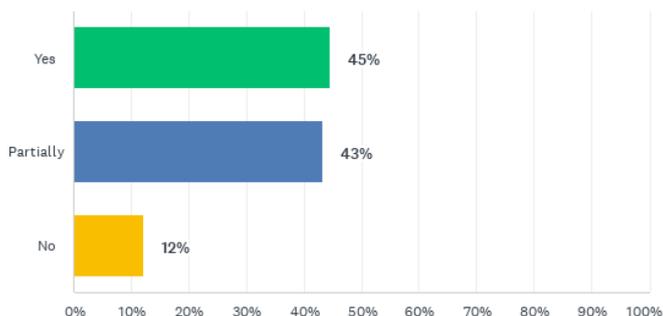
The overwhelming majority of online surveys were completed by residents (85%). Other responses were received by third sector organisations (10%) other partner organisations (7%) EFDC staff (4%) other statutory organisations (3%) private developers or landowners (3%) and elected Members of the Council (3%).

Proposed Vision

The first draft proposed vision was 'To work with the community to create great places where people want to live, and an efficient local housing authority where people want to achieve their aspirations'.

Question

Do you agree with the wording of our proposed vision?



Opinion was evenly split between those respondents who agreed with the vision (45%) and those who partially agreed (43%). A smaller proportion of respondents disagreed with the entire vision (12%).

What do you particularly like and why?

18% liked 'creating great places where people want to live'.

13% liked 'working with the community'.

What would you change and why?

26 % said they wanted to remove or change some or all of 'an efficient local authority where people want to achieve their aspirations' mainly adding that it did not make sense or was too vague.

Comments

Many contributors suggested just keeping:

'To work with the community to provide great places where people want to live'

Other reoccurring suggestions included adding safety, work or the ability to work from home affordability, have access to recreational facilities, green spaces, the environment, and homes for local people.

The revised vision presented to Stronger Communities Select Committee for consideration is

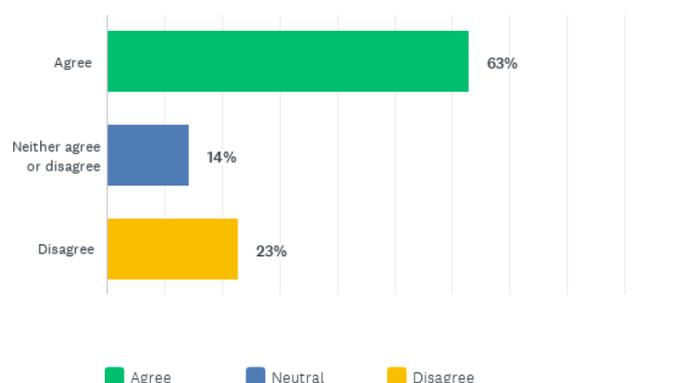
'To work with the community to provide great places where people want to live, work, thrive and prosper in safe good quality homes that meet their needs.'

Proposed priorities

The on-line survey then listed the five proposed priorities and asked whether participants a) agreed, b) neither agreed or disagreed, or c) disagreed, and invited alternative suggestions or comments.

Question - Do you agree with....

Priority 1: Increase the supply of affordable housing



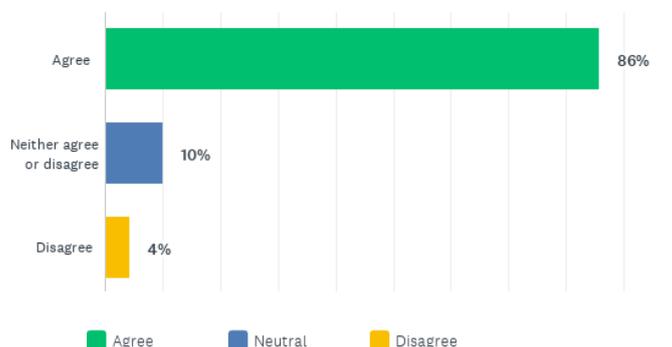
Most respondents agreed with Increasing the supply of affordable housing (63%) although more people disagreed with this as a priority (23%) than the other proposals.

Comments:

Reoccurring themes included the need to increase the supply of social housing, clarity on the definition of affordable housing and that ‘affordable housing’ is not really affordable. Several respondents questioned building Council housing at the same time as selling it through the Right to Buy.

Other references were made to ensuring the increase the supply of affordable housing of the right size and type in the right mix to ensure families do not outgrow their homes.

Priority 2: Quality and standards

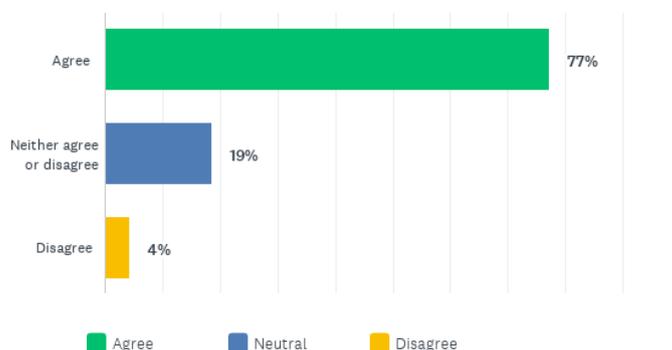


The vast majority of respondents agreed with this priority (86%), only a few neither agreed or disagreed (10%) and very few disagreed (4%).

Comments:

Several suggestions included adding the word ‘safety’ given its importance, and prefixing the priority with something like ‘promoting or increasing’, i.e., Promote quality, safety, and standards.

Priority 3: Promote health wellbeing and independence

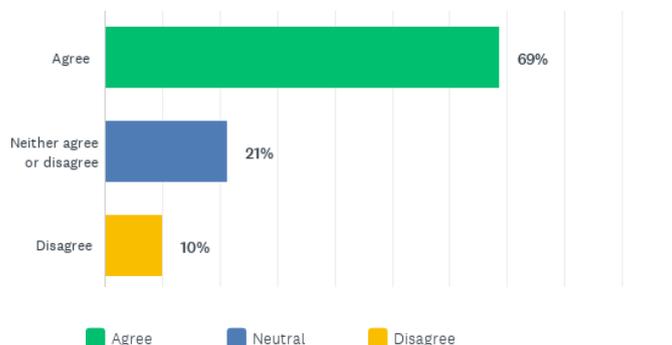


More than three quarters of respondents agreed with this priority (77%). Again, very few (4%) disagreed. The remainder neither agreed nor disagreed (19%).

Comments:

There is no mention of children or the younger generation. Perhaps this priority should include ‘for all age groups’ or something similar.

Priority 4: Economic growth and regeneration



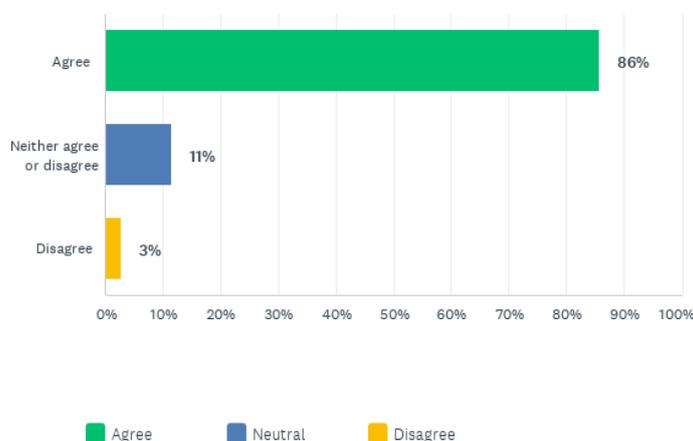
Over two thirds of respondents (69%) agreed with this proposal although slightly more disagreed with this priority than other priorities (10%), and the remainder (21%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Comments:

Several concerns were raised over the demand on/or need for increased infrastructure and the negative effects of high-density housing on services, most notably education followed by NHS provision.

Generally, those who disagreed disputed the need for regeneration, either because they did not consider the area (overall) to be deprived or that it would fail to preserve the rare historical town.

Priority 5: Protect and enhance the environment



A large majority of respondents agreed with this priority (86%) and while some neither agreed nor disagreed, this proposal attracted the least disagreement (3%).

Comments:

Add the word promote or increase (protecting and enhancing the environment)
 The environment should be higher up on the list of priorities.

The proposed aim and objectives for each priority

Question – Do you agree with...

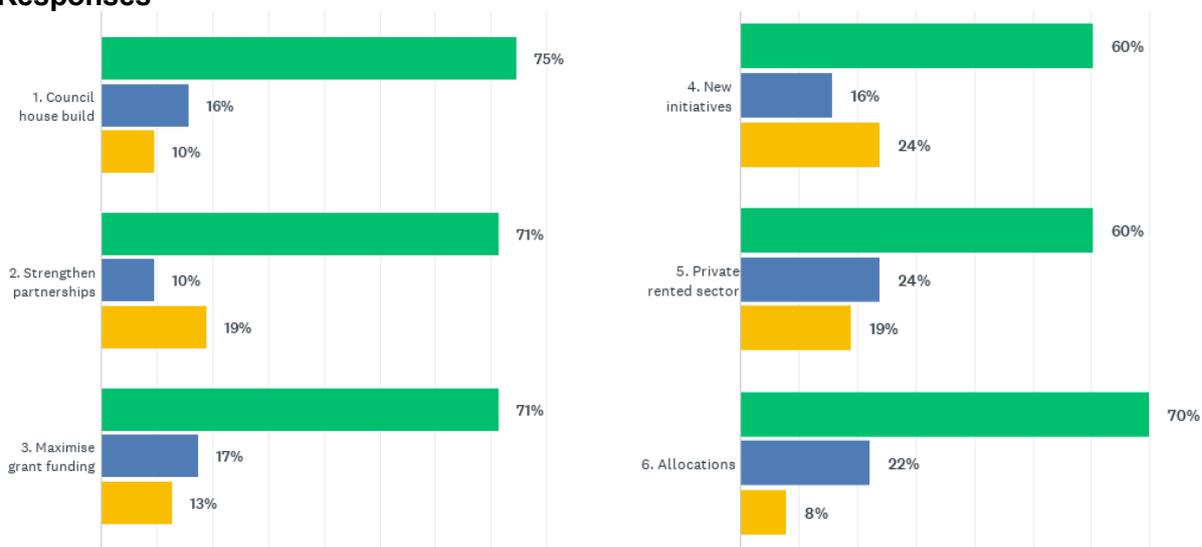
Priority 1: Increase the supply of affordable housing – proposals

Purpose: To maximise opportunities to increase the supply of suitable affordable housing and make best use of existing affordable housing (both affordable rent and affordable home ownership) in the District.

Do you agree with these proposals?

1. Highlight the **Councils Housebuilding Programme** and develop plans across all types affordable housing for rent and home ownership in the District.
2. Strengthen the links between **housing and planning partners** including pre-planning consultations negotiations and developer contributions to affordable housing.
3. Continue to work with **Homes England** to maximise funding opportunities for affordable housing.
4. Consider the benefits of the government initiatives such as **First Homes** the new model for **Shared Ownership** and **Community Self Build**.
5. Work with landlords to increase the supply of affordable **private rented housing** that complies with emerging legislation for the private sector.
6. Efficiently manage the **letting of all temporary and settled accommodation** to achieve **value for money** in accordance with the Allocations Scheme.

Responses



 Agree  Neutral  Disagree

All the proposals to increase the supply of affordable housing achieved agreement from at least 60% and up to 75% of respondents. Council House build was the most popular proposal (75%) and pursuing new Government Initiatives and private sector availability the least popular (60%).

Comments:

A considerable number of the comments related to planning policy rather than housing strategy and have been forwarded to the Planning Policy team for information and consideration.

- Building design was a reoccurring theme, including the need for it to be 'innovative' 'excellent for this rare market town', that fits with the local architecture, and 'sustainable housing with an EPC rating of A'.
- The right size, type and mix was also raised several times, houses with gardens rather than flats, family sized homes, older and disabled tenant requirements and the DWELL standard.
- 'Any actions that make the local housing policy and planning proves more transparent and easily understood are welcomed'.
- Deliver housing that achieves net zero carbon objectives by 2030 or 2050 and sustainable housing with EPC rating of A.'
- Consult the community.
- Insist on 40% affordable housing on site and significantly cut off site contributions.
- Include an action to respond appropriately to homelessness.
- Change Government Initiatives to New Initiatives.
- It is vital that there are homes for all incomes to help the community to thrive and help children grow up in stable homes.
- Encourage and support the delivery of rural affordable housing with a local connection in perpetuity and community led housing groups.

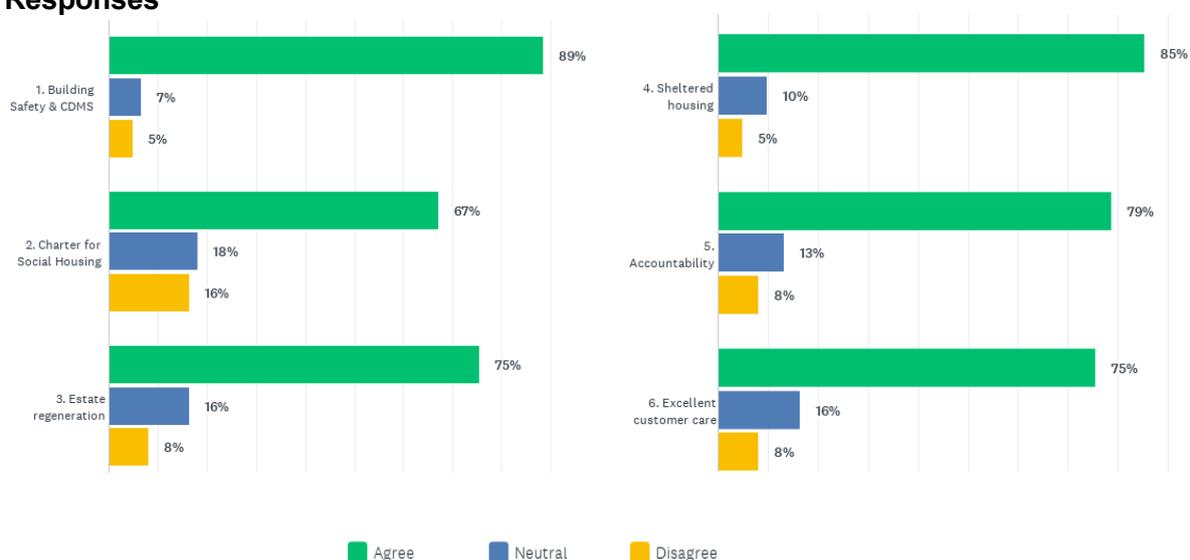
Priority 2: Quality and standards – proposed actions

Purpose: to focus on Council's commitment to offering high quality housing and housing related services.

1. Ensuring compliance with the new **Building Safety Act** and achieving the **Construction Design and Management Standards**.
2. Delivering the **Charter for Social Housing Residents**, increasing **Resident Involvement** and introducing **Tenant Selected Measures**.

3. Managing our assets through **Estate Regeneration** creating great places where people want to live and properties that meet the new **Decent Homes Standard**.
4. Modernising our housing services for older people and the **Sheltered Housing** that we provide to make the best use of assistive technology and disability adaptations.
5. Working in partnership with the **Regulator for Social Housing** and the **Housing Ombudsman** to ensure residents know what standards they can expect to receive, whether we are delivering to these standards and how they can complain if things do go wrong.
6. Inspiring and training staff to provide **excellent customer care** and a range of high-quality housing services that focus on more than bricks and mortar.

Responses



Building Safety and Construction Management Design Standards afforded the most agreement (89%) followed closely by Modernising Sheltered Housing (85%). The Charter for Social Housing Tenants attracted the least agreement (67%) and the most disagreement (16%).

Comments:

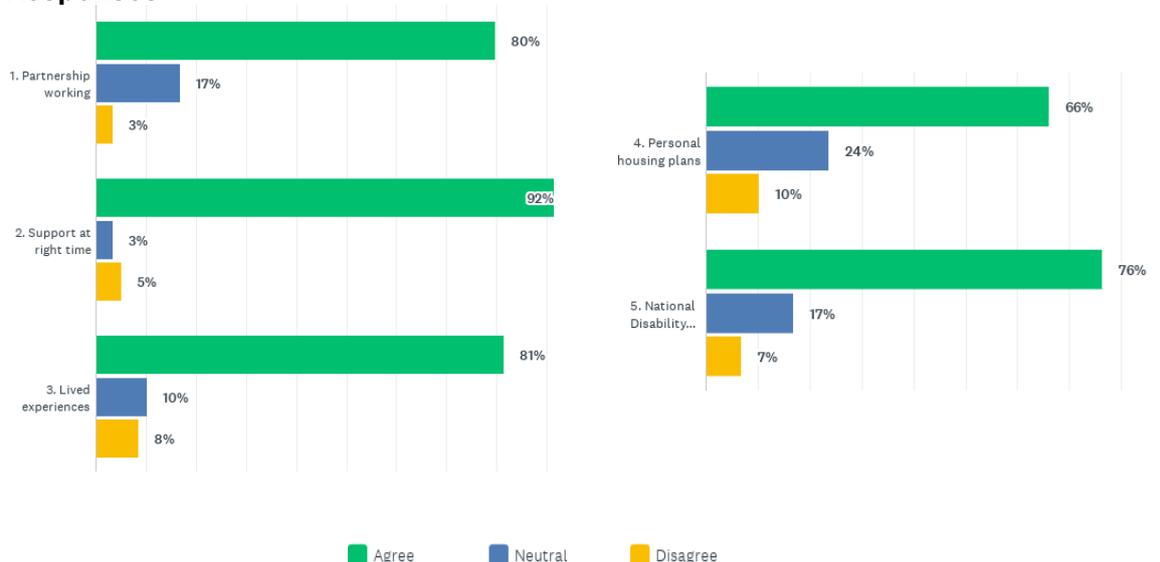
- The balance between fire safety retrofit and access to usable outdoor space is difficult but we have to get it right.
- Customer care requires knowledge of buildings and how to keep stock in good condition.
- One of the standards should be 'Access to Good Quality (ICT) Networks'.
- This priority refers to the landlord's role which should not be in the Housing Strategy.
- Better face to face links should be part of excellent customer care.

Priority 3: Promote health wellbeing and independence – proposed actions

Purpose: to promote health and wellbeing to enable residents to live safe independent lives and receive the appropriate housing related support when it is needed.

1. Delivering good outcomes for residents in **partnership** with Public Health, Community Safety, Social Care, Communities and Culture and third sector organisations in keeping with the requirements of the **Health and Care Act**.
2. Offering **appropriate assistance** at the right time for people who are, or may become vulnerable, to **build resilience** and live independent lives to the best of their ability.
3. Listening to, understanding and responding to our residents **lived experiences** and **aspirations** and promote **opportunities** for residents to improve their health, wellbeing, and life-chances.
4. Developing personal housing plans that encourage the take up of **social activities** available in the District.
5. Adopting the housing related aspects of the recently published **National Disabilities Strategy**.

Responses



By far the most agreement was with ‘Support at the Right Time (92%), whereas ‘Personal Housing Plans’ was the least favored (66%).

Comments

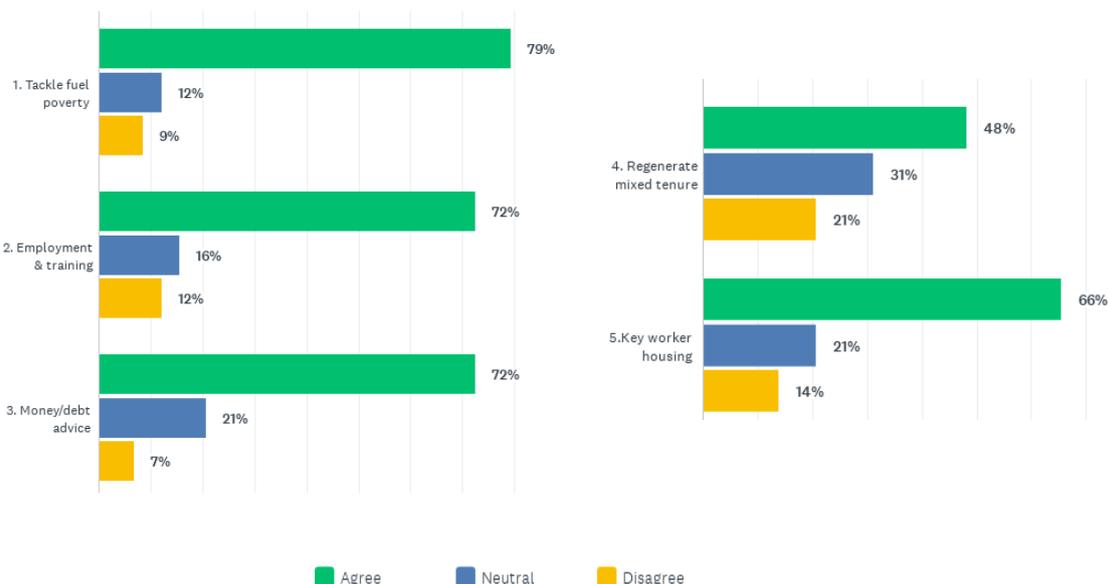
- Try and avoid jargon.
- There needs to be more about diversity.
- Include the importance of Lived Experiences here.
- Include more (support at the right time) for those with poor mental health to keep them safe/others safe.
- That people are treated with dignity and their needs are correctly identified.
- Stress the benefits of building resilience so that people in the area can keep things going in a crisis.
- Include the More than Just Housing approach to community led housing.

Priority 4: Economic growth and regeneration – proposed actions

Purpose: to work with partners on levelling up the life chances of our residents and bridging the gap between housing related costs and the ability of households on low incomes to meet these costs.

1. Tackling **fuel poverty** by promoting initiatives to reduce energy bills and the take-up of financial help that is available to meet increasing costs.
2. Where appropriate, encouraging households in housing need to take up **employment, training, and apprentice initiatives** to improve economic wellbeing and address local skills shortages.
3. Reviewing the support that is available for households in debt and the impact of the **Debt Respite Scheme Regulations 2020** on the way we help tenants to maintain their rent accounts.
4. **Regenerating** Council and mixed tenure estates and enabling aspirations to move from rented accommodation to home ownership.
5. Exploring the feasibility of developing more **key-worker housing** for rent and affordable home ownership in the District.

Responses



Tackling fuel poverty saw the highest level of support (79%). Regeneration of mixed tenure estates was the only proposal within the survey to receive support from less than half of all respondents (48%).

Comments:

- Provide the means of energy saving and self-generation rather than cash.
- Care is needed as many Right to Buy/ shared owners have not been able to afford sustainable capital works (roof air source heat pumps etc.).
- Regeneration should not be framed as an exchange for some people to end up as

homeowners. It often nowadays means displacement.

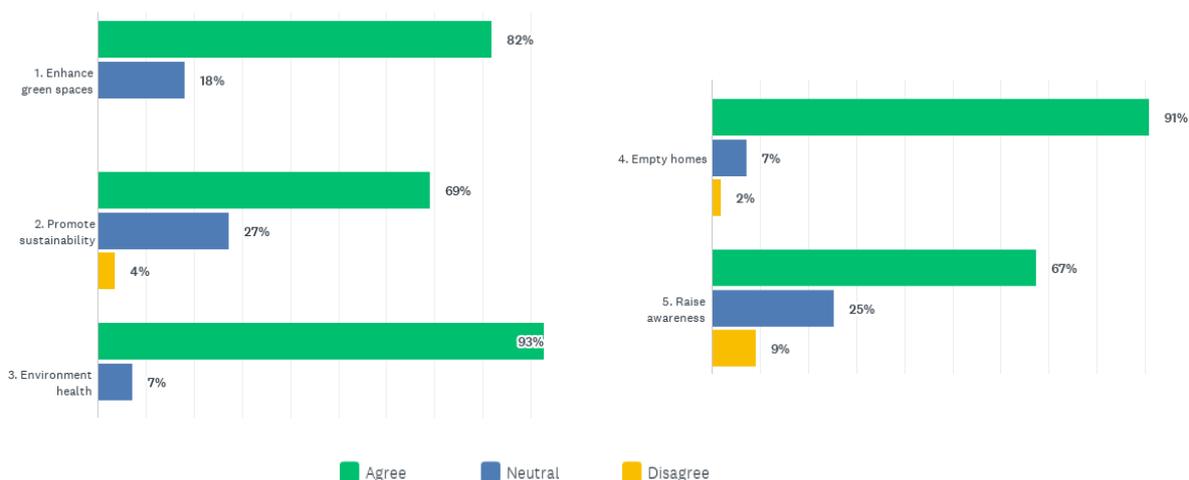
- Ensure all newbuild is future proofed, not only to rent but live in and maintain in the future.
- It is difficult to define key workers – all living and working in the District have an important role.

Priority 5: Protect and enhance the environment – proposed actions

Purpose: preserving restoring and celebrating the natural environment and the culture and heritage that is unique to the District.

1. Improving the look and feel of the green spaces on our council and **mixed tenure estates** through the More than Bricks and Mortar campaign.
2. Achieving synergy with the housing related aspects of the Local Plan regarding **climate change**, net zero carbon requirements, tree preservation and **sustainable transport**.
3. Working in partnership to tackle **environmental health issues** such as noise and air pollution, fly tipping, anti-social behaviour, the condition of private sector stock and licensing laws.
4. Reviewing the resources that are available to **bring empty homes back in to use**, and the Council’s approach to doing so.
5. Launching campaigns to **raise awareness** of environmental and social issues such as homelessness in conjunction with the Museums and Heritage services.

Responses



Working in partnership to tackle environmental health issues achieved the most support across the survey (93%). Withing this category raising awareness was the least favored (67%).

Comments:

- Take a pro-active approach to providing children’s play areas, mixed age. communities for better integration and mental wellbeing for older residents.
- There should be an aim to protect and enhance biodiversity.
- Regulate and enforce parking provision on estates.
- Protect the green belt.

- Ensure a decent built environment by respecting existing development and places.
- New builds should include existing trees and build around them.
- How is a campaign to raise homelessness awareness linked to Museums?
- Consider the voice and input of community led housing groups in bringing empty homes back in to use.
- Every new-build and refurbishment should meet the highest standard for net zero by 2030.

7. PROFILING INFORMATION

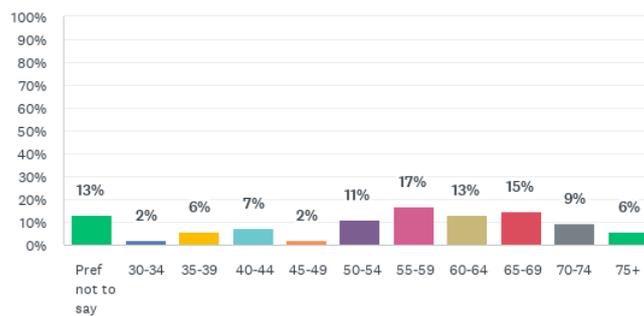
Profile of respondents – online surveys only

The online survey asked respondents to provide confidential profiling information for anonymous monitoring purpose. They were given the option of not answering the question or ticking 'prefer not to say'.

This profiling information was not gathered from contributors to the professional stakeholders' workshop, briefings, or webinars.

Age

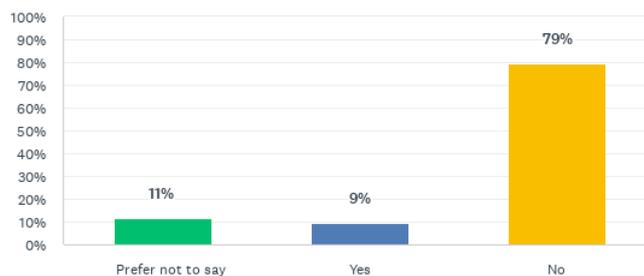
Please indicate your age group



The majority of respondents were between the ages of 50-69 with the highest number being in the 55–59-year age group (17%). The youngest respondents were in the 30-34 age group (2%) and a several preferred not to say (13%).

Disability

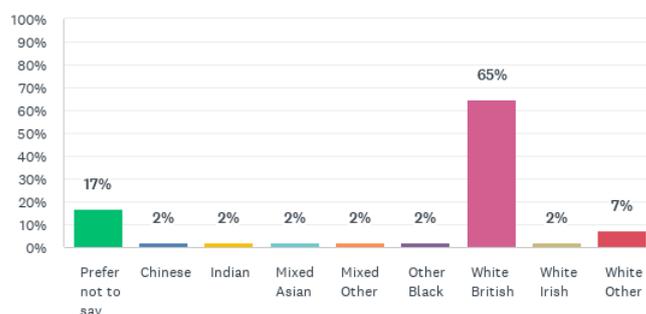
Do you consider yourself to have a disability? By disability we mean whether you have a long-term difficulty with your mental or physical health, or a learning difficulty, that affects your ability to carry out day to day activities.



Most respondents did not consider themselves to have a disability (79%). More people chose not to say (11%) than reported that they did have a disability (9%).

Ethnic origin

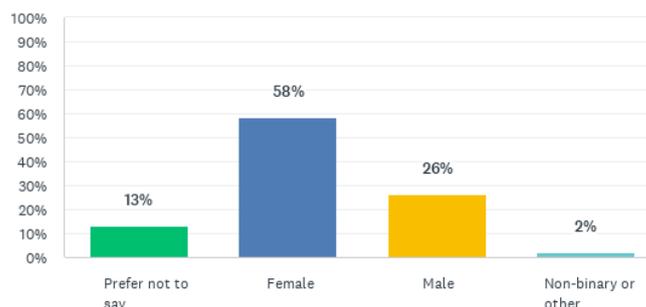
Please indicate your ethnic origin



By far the highest majority of respondents described themselves as white British (65%). The next most frequent response was preferring not to say (17%). Equal numbers described themselves as Chinese, Indian, mixed Asian, mixed Other, other Black or white Irish (2%).

Gender identity

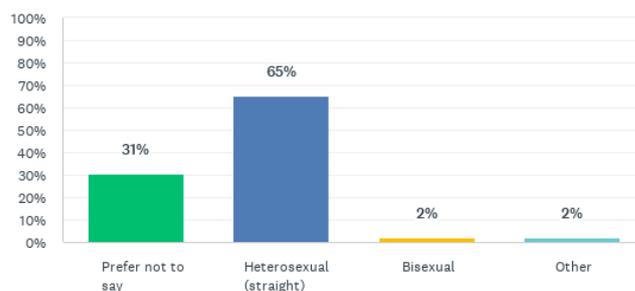
How would you describe your gender identity



The majority of respondents described their gender identity as female (58%), followed by male (26%), prefer not to say (13%) and non-binary or other (2%).

Sexual orientation

Please indicate your sexual orientation



Most of the people who responded to the survey indicated that they were Heterosexual (65%)
A relatively high number chose 'prefer not to say (31%) and other (2%).

8. PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS

Consideration is to be given to making the following modifications to the proposals for the draft Housing Strategy 2023-2027 as a result of the consultation detailed in this report.

Proposed modification	Action
VISION	Amend vision to include 'Work', 'Safety', 'Needs' and 'Thrive'
Priority 1	Move summary of Local Plan and Garden Town into Introduction
	Define Affordable Homeownership, Affordable Rent and Social Rent
	Change Government Initiatives to New Initiatives
	Change Private Landlords to The Private Rented Sector
	Amend Lettings to Allocations
	Refer to homelessness prevention and relief
	Refer to rural exception sites
	Forward the planning related feedback to Planning Policy
Priority 2	Include 'Safety' in the title
	Add meet or exceed Decent Home Standards
	Refer to excellent customer care
	Refer to post pandemic face to face meetings
	Refer to access to good quality networks
Priority 3	Explain 'Independence' in the context of this priority
	Change 'Shared Services to Partnership Working'
	Add Right Support at the Right Time as an explicit objective
	Reference more for mental health and safety
	Add Lived Experiences here
	Make explicit reference to diversity
	Include the needs of children and young people
	Review and reference relevance of 'More than Just Housing'
Priority 4	Change Debt Management to Money/Debt Advice
	Change affordable home ownership to regeneration
Priority 5	Make explicit reference to bringing empty homes back into use
	Make explicit reference to addressing carparking on estates

This report was scrutinized by Stronger Communities Committee on 12 July 2022, and it was resolved the report be recommended to Cabinet without change by as part of the detailed proposals for the draft Housing Strategy 2022-2027 (now 2023-2027).

9. NEXT STEPS

Subject to Cabinet approval, this Review of the Housing Strategy Consultation Outcome Report will be published with the Housing Strategy for 2023-2027 to conclude the review of 'The Big Four' that also includes the Allocations Scheme 2022-2027, the Tenancy Policy 2022-2027 and the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027 which obtained Cabinet approval in March 2022.

Attachments – Appendix A Professional Stakeholder Workshop Presentations

Appendix B Professional Stakeholder Delegate List

Appendix C Briefing and Webinar Presentations

For further information or to receive this report in an alternative format please contact The Housing Strategy Team Housingstrategy@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Version	Date	Details of changes included in update	Author
00.01	4.07.22	Draft for Stronger Communities	Janice Nuth
00.02	25.10.22	Draft for Pre- Cabinet APG Amend 2022-2027 to 2023-2027 Update next steps	Janice Nuth

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4 July 2022

25 October 2022